(b,) and (c) The two sides discussed a range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern, including the evolving security situation in Asia. In the context of reducing tensions in South Asia, the US side expressed hope for the resumption of Indo-Pak talks. The US side reiterated its position, as articulated by President Clinton, namely urging restraint, respect for Line of Control, refraining from violence and for renewed lines of communication. The two sides also discussed the persisting problem of cross-border terrorism in India. The US side expressed understanding for India's position that Pakistan must Stop its support for cross-border terrorism and violence in Jammu and Kashmir and create the conditions for the dialogue to take place.

Issue of Passports

1323. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister o,f EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Passports issued all over the country from 1st April to 30th *June,* 2000, State-wise;

(b) the pending demand for passports in different States, as on date;

(c) the reasons for delay in issuing passports;

(d) whether more offices are proposed to be opened to facilitate easy issuance of passports; and

(e) the steps proposed to curb the backlog?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Details are given in the Statement-I *(See* below).

(b) Details are given in the Statement-II *(See* below). Pending demand for passports include those applications which are pending for over 35 days for want of police verification reports and those applications where police reports have been received but passports have yet to be issued.

(c) Reasons for delay in issue of passports *inter-alia* include receipt of negative or incomplete reports or non-receipt of reports from the Police Authorities; discrepencies in documents submitted by the applicants, particularly in respect of applications received by post and incomplete information from the applicants. The continuing shortage of staff including officers also contributes to delays.

(d) At present, there is no proposal to open more passport offices in the country.

(e) Major steps proposed to curb backlog are:

(i) Full computerisation of processing of passport applications.

(ii) Machine printing of passports.

(iii) Co-ordination with police authorities to expedite receipt of police verification reports.

(iv) Increasing the number of counters and clerks for thorough scrutiny of applications at the time of acceptance to eliminate incomplete applications and for faster processing of applications thereafter.

(v) Creation of more posts to cope with the increased volume of work.

Statement-I

The Number of Passports issued from 1.4.2000 *to* 30.6.2000

S.No.	Name of State	Passport issued from 1.4.2000 to 30.6.2000
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	120
2.	Assam	2542
3.	Andhra Pradesh	58637
4.	Bihar	11400
5.	Goa	4601
6.	Gujarat	40288
7.	Haryana	11264
8.	Himachal Pradesh	1140
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	2935
10.	Karnataka	30345
11.	Kerala	79613
12.	Madhya Pradesh	9346
13.	Maharashtra	53429
14.	Manipur	320
15.	Meghalaya	490
16.	Mizoram	270
17.	Nagaland	300
18.	Orissa	3365
19.	Punjab	43147

S.No.	Name of State	Passport issued from 1.4.2000 to 30.6.2000
20.	Rajasthan	15730
21.	Sikkim	205
22.	Tamil Nadu	63298
23.	Tripura	231
24.	Uttar Pradesh	38723
25.	West Bengal	23026
26.	Delhi	36921
27.	Chandigarh (U.T.)	2568

Statement-II

Pending demand at various Passport Offices as on 21.7.2000

S.No.	Name to State	Pendency
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	18
2.	Assam	80
3.	Andhra Pradesh	1186
4.	Bihar	1525
5.	Goa	2197
6.	Gujarat	8631
7.	Haryana	8349
8.	Himachal Pradesh	1850
9.	Jammu and Kashmir	10330
10.	Karnataka	2146
11.	Kerala	362
12.	Madhya Pradesh	638
13.	Maharashtra	29160
14.	Manipur	38
15.	Meghalaya	35
16.	Mizoram	28
17.	Nagaland	40
18.	Orissa	1998
19.	Punjab	21525
20.	Rajasthan	2711
21.	Sikkim	27
22.	Tamil Nadu	24079

S.No.	Name to State	Pendency
23.	Tripura	48
24.	Uttar Pradesh	24920
25.	West Bengal	6622
26.	Delhi	5345
27.	Chandigarh	2475

Amendment of IT Act

1324. SHRI R. S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to enact amendment to Information Technology Act to bring intellectual property rights and regulations of electronic payment gateways under its purview;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the details of the alternative arrangements made to deal with these key areas?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) There is no proposal to enact amendment to Information Technology Act, 2000 to bring intellectual property rights and regulations of electronic payment gateways under its purview.

(c)The existing provisions in the Copy Right Act and the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 will deal with the issues pertaining to intellectual property right and regulation of electronic payment gateways. The amendments to Section 58 of the Reserve Bank of India enacted through Information Technology Act, 2000 enables Reserve Bank of India to frame regulations for electronic fund transfer from Bank to Bank through Reserve Bank of India.

Creation of Multilingual Internet Technology

1325. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken appropriate action for creation of multilingual internet technology and Website contents to facilitate Internet based education;

(b) if so, the details of fresh initiatives taken/under consideration in this regard alongwith the implications thereof; and